

## "TWO VOTES FOR WILSON AND MARSHALL" That is the slogan.

The argument in this campaign is on our side. This argument may not have been presented to your neighbor who intends to vote the republican ticket. Let everyone who favors the election of Wilson and Marshall make determined effort, between now and election day, to get one vote from among his neighbors. From now on let the slogan be "Two votes for Wilson and Marshall—my own and another man's."

### A SINGLE PRESIDENTIAL TERM

One of the issues presented by the democratic platform, and emphasized by Mr. Roosevelt's candidacy, is the single presidential term.

The constitution places no limit upon the number of terms which a president can hold successively, but Washington set a precedent by refusing to consider a third term. Jefferson not only followed the example of Washington, but commended the precedent as one essential to the country's welfare. The two-term precedent was observed by Madison, Monroe and Jackson. Only one attempt has since been made to overthrow that precedent and that was made by ex-President Grant after he had been out of office four years. His case was identical with Mr. Roosevelt's except that when a party convention refused a third nomination to Mr. Grant he acquiesced in the decision of the convention.

Mr. Roosevelt, on the contrary, aspired to a third nomination, and as far as can be judged from the primaries held in a portion of the states would have been nominated for a third term had all the republican voters been able to express themselves directly on the subject. (It must be remembered, however, that every candidate's strength is relative, and that Mr. Roosevelt's support was due partly to violent opposition to Mr. Taft and not entirely to admiration for Mr. Roosevelt).

The attempt of Mr. Roosevelt to secure a third term by the organization of a new party, together with his conduct during his first term, and the conduct of Mr. Taft during his present term—all these combined—have forced upon the country the consideration of the advantages of a single term.

Mr. Roosevelt, it will be remembered, did not attempt any reforms during his first term. The reason given was that, having come into the office by the accident of death, he felt it his duty to carry out the policies of his predecessor. His friends said: "Just wait until he is elected president in his own right and then he will do something."

The platform of 1900, however, did not pledge him to any reform. He did not take the people into his confidence and outline any remedial legislation. There never was a platform more thoroughly padded with platitudes and praise of the party. Whatever reforms he undertook were undertaken in the second session, and without previous pledge. Out of seven years and a half, only four contain anything in the way of progressive work, and in these four years such progressive measures as were enacted were enacted only with democratic aid and in pursuance of democratic pledges, and these were outweighed by inaction on important questions and by a retrograde movement in other matters.

During Mr. Taft's administration the attempt to conciliate the potential political influences has been obvious. The president has given the benefit of the doubt to that portion of his party

which, though numerically weak, is powerful in conventions.

The fear that he might not be re-nominated has affected the president like creeping paralysis, and, in saying this, there is no intention of reflecting upon the president's good intentions. It is expecting too much of frail human nature to think that a man in such a position can escape the pressure, even though the victim is unconscious of it, exerted by those who are supposed to be in a position where they can give or withhold presidential nominations and elections.

Abuses are never corrected until the people are convinced that the abuses exist—the people are much more apt to tolerate an abuse too long than to remedy it too quickly. The voters, however, are at last awake to the evils of a second term. There is a growing disposition to limit state executives to a single term, in order that they may be free from the blinding influence of a selfish interest and be in position to act with an eye single to the public welfare.

If it is wise to thus protect a governor from influences that might swerve him from the path of duty, is it not much more necessary to protect a president from those same influences? There are forty-eight governors, but only one president, and that president exerts more influence than the forty-eight governors combined. Hundreds of thousands of public officials depend upon his will for their daily bread; he can dismiss them at pleasure and, however improbable the exercise of this power, the fear of its exercise exerts a coercive influence.

He is commander-in-chief of the army and the navy; no king or emperor or czar has, or would dare to exercise, the authority conferred upon, and exercised by a president of the United States. Surely, if there is a position on earth in which a man ought to be free to carry out all promises made and to act upon his conscience and his judgment where previous pledges do not direct, that man is the president of the United States. As long as a man is looking for a second nomination and a second election—not to speak of a third or fourth—he can not, unless superhuman, be entirely indifferent to the influences that dominate politics.

The time is ripe, therefore, for an amendment to the constitution which will strengthen our presidents by removing the temptations that make men weak, and the democratic party leads the way to this important change. It proposes to limit the president to a single term, so that when he takes his oath of office he will have nothing before him but the performance of his duties—no ambition but to make sure his place in history by fidelity to the public weal.

Both Mr. Taft and Mr. Roosevelt are opposed to the single term proposition—the latter not having yet announced any limitation whatever upon the number of presidential terms. If Mr. Roosevelt succeeds in overthrowing the two term precedent, who can establish a more binding precedent? Is the very laudable desire of the people to rule to be used to open the door to an unlimited succession of terms? Does the rule of the people mean nothing more than their right to keep a president in office for life? And can the voters ignore the fact that even now the president can coerce a considerable portion of the population, and that Mr. Roosevelt's policy on the trust question would multiply the president's power to coerce?

Governor Wilson is pledged by his platform to a single term. If by the suffrages of his countrymen he is lifted to this supreme pinnacle

of power, he will enter the office a people's president, nominated without the aid of the exploiting class and elected in spite of those who traffic in favors. Thus unfettered by obligations to special interests and bound only to the whole people, he can address himself to the duties of his office and devote his body, his brain and his heart to the gigantic task of making this country what the fathers intended it to be—a government of the people, by the people and for the people.

#### MR. ROOSEVELT AND THE TARIFF

A reader of *The Commoner* asks if it is true that Mr. Roosevelt was once a "tariff reformer." It is true, and at one time Mr. Roosevelt even went so far as to become a member of a free trade club. When he resigned his membership in that organization he wrote a letter in which he said that he was "a republican first, and a free trader afterwards." If the reader who makes this inquiry will look at pages 66 and 67 of the "Life of Thomas H. Benton," a book written by Mr. Roosevelt, he will find that Mr. Roosevelt wrote as follows:

"The vote on the protective tariff law of 1828 furnished another illustration of the solidarity of the west. New England had abandoned her free trade position since 1824 and the north-west was strongly for the new tariff; the southern sea coast states, except Louisiana, opposed it bitterly; and the bill was carried by the support of the western states, both the free and the slave. This tariff bill was the first of the immediate irritating causes which induced South Carolina to go into the nullification movement. Benton's attitude on the measure was that of a good many other men who, in their public capacities, are obliged to appear as protectionists, but who lack his frankness in stating their reasons. He utterly disbelieved in and was opposed to the principles of the bill, but as it had bid for and secured the interest of Missouri by a heavy duty on lead, he felt himself forced to support it; and he so announced his position. He simply went with his state, precisely as did Webster, the latter, in following Massachusetts' change of front and supporting the tariff of 1828, turning a full and complete somersault. Neither the one nor the other was to blame. For free traders are apt to look at the tariff from a sentimental standpoint; but it is in reality purely a business matter, and should be decided solely on grounds of expediency. Political economists have pretty generally agreed that protection is vicious in theory and harmful in practice; but if the majority of the people in interest want it, and it affects only themselves there is no earthly reason why they should not be allowed to try the experiment to their hearts' content. The trouble is that it rarely does affect only themselves and in 1828 the evil was peculiarly aggravated on account of the unequal way in which the proposed law would affect different sections. It purported to benefit the rest of the country, but it undoubtedly worked real injury to the planter states, and there is small ground to wonder that the irritation over it in the region so affected should have been intense."

"Do all the good you can.

At all the times you can.

To all the people you can.

In all the places you can.

In all the ways you can.

As long as ever you can."

—And say nothing about it.

"What I want to claim for the democratic party is this, that no man can really be a democrat who doesn't include himself every time he thinks of the people. It isn't merely a program, it is not merely an intellectual agreement; you might agree with all the republicans in the United States as to what ought to be done, but you wouldn't be a democrat unless you know why it ought to be done. Not for the benefit of anybody in particular but for the benefit of everybody in general. That is the way to find out whether you are a democrat or not. But the heart, gentlemen, does not solve national problems. You have got to harness the mind and the heart in order to do that, and we might as well have the facts as they are."—Woodrow Wilson.